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ABSTRACT

This set of objectives is designed to increase teachers' knowledge about the historical and cultural heritage of Afro-Americans. Instructional materials and learning activities which can be used in meeting each of the objectives are listed. A preassessment test, criteria for measuring each objective, and numerous reference and resource citations are included. A bibliography is included in the appendix. (EB)

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AFRO-AMERICANS

STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODULE

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ETHNIC HERITAGE STUDIES PROJECT
ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODULE

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Atlanta Public Schools
Program Development
Division of Instructional
Planning and Development

1975 – 1976

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODULE
AFRO-AMERICAN HERITAGE

Rationale

Black people in the Americas have had a unique experience. They were among the early explorers and settlers conquering new lands. However, early in the 1600's history changed its course and Africans by the thousands were captured and enslaved in the North American colonies. The experiences faced by their ancestors have been ones of discrimination and prejudice.

Afro-Americans, who now number 22.6 million in the United States, have fought many battles for equality in the social, political and economic "worlds" of American society. Some have been won but the scars of conflicts and dilemas of their history of slavery and the unjust practices of racial discrimination remain.

Therefore, the classroom teacher needs to become sensitized to the historical and cultural heritage of Afro-Americans so that the instructional strategies and materials used in the classroom will promote greater understanding, appreciation and acceptance of the rich Afro-American heritage. It is evident that this heritage must be understood by Afro-American pupils so that strong racial pride and dignity may develop. It must be understood by other pupils also so that growth in racial integrity and tolerance will occur. To do this, teachers must disseminate accurate and meaningful knowledge about the historical and cultural heritage of Afro-Americans.

Objectives

1. To demonstrate sensitivity to the historical heritage of Afro-Americans.

2. To demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage of Afro-Americans.

3. To demonstrate the ability to select, develop and evaluate instructional strategies and materials which effectively teach the Afro-American experience.

Directions to the Instructor

This module is competency based and has instructional objectives listed which specify certain competencies needed by participants for successful teaching experiences.

Each objective is numbered and criteria for measuring the objective is identified with decimal numbers. For example, the first objective is numbered 1.; the first criterion for measuring this objective is numbered 1.1. Assessment items are numbered to correlate with the criterion measured.

The learning activities are written in terms of instructor action and may be adapted for individual instruction whenever the instructor finds it advisable. Since this module is considered a staff development course, the following time allocation is suggested:

½ day for orientation and distribution of materials

½ day for readings (other readings assigned for home activities)

1-3 days for preparation/research/development of learning activities (at least one for each criterion)

1 day for demonstration of skills learned/evaluation

Materials

1. Atlanta Public Schools Ethnic Heritage Project materials — teachers' resource guide, Afro-Americans — Historical and Cultural Heritage
2. Educational Design Inc., Silhouettes in Courage (filmstrip cassette)
3. Guidance Associates, The Search for Black Identity (filmstrip/cassette)
4. Scholastic Magazines, Inc., Scholastic's Black Culture Program (filmstrip/cassette)
5. Cardmon, Langston Hughes' Simple (record)
6. Poster boards and construction paper
7. Scissors
8. Paste and glue
9. Old magazines (Ebony, Essence and other black publications)
10. Record and cassette players
11. Projectors
12. Marking pens (all colors)
13. Films list — Appendix A of No. 1 above

Pre-Assessment

Directions: Select the correct answer from the four choices listed.

1. _____ 1.1 The ancestors of most Afro-Americans came from

   (a) East Coast Africa
   (b) Tanzania
   (c) West Coast Africa
   (d) Saharan Africa

2. _____ 1.2 Afro-Americans are all of the following except

   (a) descendants of the Bantu tribe
   (b) people of mixed ancestry
   (c) socially and economically deprived because of racial restriction, segregation, prejudice, and discrimination
   (d) people called by many names (Negro, Black, Colored, etc.)

3. _____ 1.2 Great ancient African civilizations developed in all of the following except

   (a) Ghana
   (b) Mali
   (c) Mesopotamia
   (d) Ganghay

4. _____ 1.3 The first Africans brought to Virginia in 1619 were

   (a) freed men
   (b) indentured servants
   (c) slaves
   (d) explorers

5. _____ 1.3 The Emancipation Proclamation

   (a) freed all slaves
   (b) gave America its independence from England
   (c) abolished "Jim Crow" laws
   (d) freed slaves in the Confederate States only

6. _____ 1.3 Estevanica

   (a) led slave revolts
   (b) was an early black explorer of the Americas
   (c) died a Civil War hero
   (d) invented the cotton gin

7. _____ 1.4 All of the people listed below were leading abolitionists except

   (a) Frederick Douglass
   (b) W. E. B. Dubois
   (c) Harriet Tubman
   (d) Sojourner Truth

8. _____ 2.3 The most influential institution on the Afro-American heritage is

   (a) the school
   (b) the Supreme Court
   (c) the church
   (d) the home

9. _____ 2.3 All of the following are true of Afro-Americans' educational growth except

(a) moved from years of educational denial to successful accomplishments
(b) about sixteen per cent of young Afro-Americans are attending college today
(c) a decline in the number of educated Afro-Americans is occurring
(d) Afro-American parents of today have about 4 years more schooling than before

10. _____ 2.4 The basic language spoken by most Afro-Americans is

(a) Swahili
(b) English dialect
(c) English
(d) none of these

11. _____ 2.5 All of the following are known as "Soul" food except

(a) beef tongue
(b) collards and ham hock
(c) yams
(d) pig feet and tails

12. _____ 2.6 Afro-Americans have made great contributions to American society in all of the following except

(a) Music
(b) Art
(c) Literature
(d) Bull-fighting

13. _____ 2.6 The following are great Afro-American performers except

(a) Leontyne Price
(b) Bill Cosby
(c) Aretha Franklin
(d) Jackie Robinson

14. _____ 1.4 Afro-Americans played prominent roles in legislatures of the Southern States

(a) during the Reconstruction Period
(b) during World War I
(c) during the American Revolution
(d) before the Civil War

15. _____ 1.4 State "Jim Crow" laws were legalized by the following Supreme Court decision

(a) Dred Scott Decision
(b) Sweatt vs. Painter
(c) Plessy vs. Ferguson
(d) Gaines vs. Missouri

16. _____ 1.4 The non-violent Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's was led by

(a) Marcus Garvey
(b) Martin Luther King, Jr.
(b) Stokely Carmichael
(d) Nat Turner

17. _____ 1.4 All of the following led directly or indirectly to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 except

(a) The Greensboro sit-ins
(b) Rosa Parks
(c) The March on Washington of 1963
(d) The election of Senator Edward Brooke to the United States Senate

18. _____ 2.1 The Afro-American family is

(a) dominated by the mother
(b) divided into two distinct groups — stable middle class and unstable lower class
(c) usually disorganized
(d) run by the oldest family member

19. _____ 2.2 Afro-Americans number approximately

(a) 18.5 million
(b) 22.6 million
(b) 75 million
(d) 8.2 million

of the population of the United Staes of America.

20. _____2.2 Most Afro-American workers today are

(a) unemployed
(b) farmers
(c) semi-skilled and skilled laborers
(d) private household workers

KEY — PRE ASSESSMENT TEST

1. C
2. A
3. C
4. B
5. D
6. B
7. B
8. C
9. C
10. C
11. A
12. D
13. D
14. A
15. C
16. B
17. D
18. B
19. B
20. C

OBJECTIVES	LEARNING ACTIVITIES
1. DEMONSTRATES SENSITIVITY TO THE HISTORICAL HERITAGE OF AFRO-AMERICANS BY:	
1.1 differentiating between the myth "all Afro-Americans look and act alike" and fact about Afro-Americans.	Assign related readings from references.
	Have participants make a mosaic of Afro-Americans which illustrates the diversity in appearance and behavior.
1.2 identifying the ancient kingdoms of Africa and showing their importance to Afro-American Heritage.	Pass out handout #1. Have participants identify the ancient kingdoms of Africa by shading in the area on the map, using color coding to show each.
	Have participants make a map which shows the important products, places and events (the pilgrimage of Mansa Musa) of the Ancient African Kingdoms.
1.3 describing the major conditions of slavery as practiced in North America and its effects on Afro-Americans.	Have participants read the related readings and make a chart which shows the major conditions Afro-Americans encountered during slavery in America.
	Let participants view the film Black History, Lost, Stolen, or Strayed Part I and discuss the implications made about the effects of slavery on Afro-Americans with at least two other participants.
	Have participants make a chart which shows a comparison between slavery in the North and slavery in the South, showing the difficult conditions faced by Afro-Americans.
	Have participants design a poster on three abolitionists which shows the role each played in the abolition of slavery.

	REFERENCES	OTHER RESOURCES
1.1	Afro-Americans Resource Material "Who Is the Afro-American" and "African Heritage" teacher's resource guide, pp. 3-20 or 11-20 Bennett, Lerone, Jr. Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America (chapter 10) Ebony Magazine (pictures) Hughes, Langston. A Pictorial History of The Negro in America, pp. 2-4	Black History Lost, Stolen or Strayed, Part I and Part II (film) Heritage in Black (film)
1.2	Banks, James A. March Toward Freedom, pp. 1-5 Bennett, Lerone, Jr. Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America, pp. 3-28 Franklin, John Hope. Black Americans, pp. 7-12 Manoni, Mary H. The Black American: A Perspective Look	A People Uprooted 1500-1800 (filmstrip) Heritage of The Negro (film) The Search for Black Identity (filmstrip)
1.3	Afro-Americans Resource Material "Slavery: A People Uprooted, pp. 24-41 Banks, James A. March Toward Freedom, pp. 7-21 and pp. 23-31 Bennett, Lerone, Jr. Before The Mayflower: A History of Black America, pp.29-47 Franklin, John Hope. Black Americans, pp. 30-45 Franklin, John Hope. From Slavery to Freedom (chapter 4) Harris, Middleton. The Black Book, pp. 9-27	Black History, Lost, Stolen, or Strayed, Part I Chorus of Slavery 1800-1856 (filmstrip) Silhouettes In Courage II-4 (cassettes) Slaves's Story: Running A Thousand Miles to Freedom (film)

OBJECTIVES	LEARNING ACTIVITIES
1.4 identifying and analyzing the major efforts made to gain Afro-American freedom and equality in America.	Assign related readings Make a chart which shows famous Afro-American leaders who pushed for freedom and equality. List their major involvements in chronological order and describe the results of each. Have participant write a comparative analysis of the philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Dubois. Design a bulletin board which shows your findings. Have participant write a short skit which traces the Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to the present and include all major events that led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Let some participants share their skits with the group.

REFERENCES	OTHER RESOURCES
1.4 Afro-Americans Resource Material "A Cry for Equality, pp. 47-63 Banks, James A. March Toward Freedom. Dubois, W.E.B. Black Reconstruction. (use the index) Franklin, John Hope. Black Americans. Franklin, John Hope. Reconstruction After The Civil War Franklin, John Hope and Starr, Isidore. The Negro In Twentieth Century America. A Reader on The Struggle for Civil Rights. Grier, William H. and Cabs, Price M. Black Rage. King, Martin Luther, Jr. Stride Toward Freedom. Meier, August. Negro Thought in America.	Our Country Too (film) Quest For Equality 1910 to Present (filmstrip) Separate But Equal (filmstrip) Separate But Equal 1865-1910 Silhouettes In Courage

OBJECTIVES	LEARNING ACTIVITIES
2. DEMONSTRATES AN UNDERSTANDING OF AND SENSITIVITY TO THE AFRO-AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE BY:	
2.1 identifying and illustrating examples of the two basic Afro-American family groups.	Assign related readings. Have participants make a picture chart which shows the two basic Afro-American family groups.
2.2 identifying and illustrating the population status of Afro-Americans from 1630-1970.	Assign related readings. Have participants make a graphic display which shows the population growth, migration patterns, and income level of Afro-Americans, showing comparisons, when possible, of Afro-Americans and other groups.

REFERENCES	OTHER RESOURCES
Afro-American Resource Material, pp. 66-76. Cuban, Larry. The Negro In America, pp. 119-129 Frazier, Edward F. The Negro In The United States Hansberry, Lorraine. A Raisin In The Sun Maynihan, David P. The Negro Family: The Case for National Action Ploski, Harry A. and Brown, Roscoe C., Jr. The Negro Almanac, pp. 369-383 Afro-American Resource Material pp. 66-76. De Silva, Benjamin, et al. The Afro-American in The United States Ploski, Harry A. and Brown, Roscoe, C., J. The Negro Almanac, pp. 343-360 "We The Black Americans," U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census	

OBJECTIVES	LEARNING ACTIVITIES
2.3 describing and illustrating the educational, religious and attitudinal development of Afro-Americans.	Assign related readings. Discuss with participants the educational, religious and attitudinal development of Afro-Americans or let two or more discuss these concepts and report to the group their findings. Show the filmstrip "Religion I and II". Have participants select three Afro-American religious leaders and present them visually — in any creative form. Let one participant read "The Creation" by James Weldon Johnson while other members of the group play instruments and sing using appropriate songs. Afterwards, engage participants in a reaction session.

REFERENCES	OTHER RESOURCES
2.3 Afro-American Resource Material pp. 77-91 Du Bois, W.E.B. The Negro Church. Franklin, John Hope. Black Americans, pp. 85-91 Frazier, Edward F. The Negro Church In America. Johnson, James Weldon. God's Trombones. Ploski, Harry A. and Brown, Roscoe C., Jr. The Negro Almanac, pp. 484-549 and pp. 895-921 Washington, Joseph R. Black Religion: The Negro and Christianity in The United States.	Scholastic's Black Culture Program The Afro-American's Quest For Education (record)

OBJECTIVES	LEARNING ACTIVITIES
	Have participants write a poem which compares the emotional appeals of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rev. Jesse Jackson. (See Handout Appendix)
2.4 analyzing and describing the language patterns of Afro-Americans.	Assign related readings.
	Let participants develop a chart which shows many of the common word patterns used by some Afro-Americans that are considered "non-standard" English (ex. wif — with; dough — door). Have them compare their findings with other participants and discuss.
2.5 identifying foods which are commonly considered Afro-American in origin.	Assign related readings.
	Let participant prepare an Afro-American luncheon and serve "soul" foods.
	Allow each participant to make a poster which shows "soul" foods and have them write a short rationale on each kind of food shown (include its origin, how it is prepared and why, etc).

REFERENCES	OTHER RESOURCES
	Jackson, Jesse. "Give The People A Vision" (an article) King, Martin Luther, Jr. "I Have a Dream" (record)
2.4 Afro-Americans Resource Materials pp. 94-100 Davis, A. . Culture, Class, and Language Variety.	
2.5 Afro-Americans Cultural Heritage, Resource Material, pp. 116-118 Ebony Magazine (Often features "soul" food recipes) Ploski, Harry A. Negro Almanac, pp. 1041-1043 Wilson, Ellen Gibson. A West African Cookbook.	

REFERENCES	OTHER RESOURCES
2.6 identifying and describing the contributions made by Afro-Americans in Music, Art, Literature and the Performing Arts.*	Assign related readings. Have participants view the filmstrip "Black Art" and write a comparative analysis of contributions made by Afro-Americans in the field of Art. Assist participants in making a chart which shows the influence of Black Art on other great artists, such as Picasso. Have participants view the filmstrips "Black Music I and II" and make a chronological chart on the development of Afro-American music. Invite a community Afro-American musician and/or singing group to perform. Have each participant write a paper on the form(s) of music presented and compare it to rock music. Encourage them to show similarities and differences. Have the participants view "Black Poetry" I and II and discuss the implications made about Afro-Americans literary skills. Let them recite orally poems written by Afro-Americans, using the language technique of the writer. (ex. Black "dialect", etc.)

*Have participants do at least one activity for each area — Music, Art, etc.

REFERENCES	OTHER RESOURCES
2.6 Afro-American Resource Material pp. 101-115.	Scholastic's Black Culture Program
Bontempo, Arna. American Negro Poetry.	Silhouettes in Courage (cassettes)
Brewer, J. Mason. American Negro Folklore.	
Butcher, Margaret. The Negro In American Culture (use index)	
Hughes, Langston. The Best of Simple.	
Jones, LeRoi. Black Music.	
Locke, Alvin. The Negro and His Music.	
Ploski, Harry A. and Brown, Roscoe C., Jr. The Negro Almanac, pp. 703-724 and pp. 795-817	
Porter, James A. Modern Negro Art.	

OBJECTIVES	LEARNING ACTIVITIES
2.6 cont.	Play Langston Hughes' "Simple" record and have participants write an analysis of his style in these narratives. Have them compare Hughes' works with those of another Afro-American writer. Have participants select five poems written by Afro-Americans and make poster which expresses the meaning of each. Invite a college professor or high school Literature teacher to lecture on accomplishments of Afro-American writers. Show the filmstrip, "Black Dance", to participants and have them write a short paper on the history of Afro-American dancers. Have participants do profile charts on at least five Afro-American performers each. Encourage them to include all fields — dancer, actors and actresses, singers, etc. Request participants to read at least two autobiographies of Afro-American performers and do a visual profile on one of them. (ex. His Eye Is On The Sparrow, by Ethel Waters)

REFERENCES	OTHER RESOURCES
2.6 Turner, Darwin and Stanford, Barbara D. Theory and Practice In The Teaching of Literature By Afro-Americans.	Hughes, Langston. "Simple" (record) Ploski, Harry A. and Brown, Roscoe C., Jr. The Negro Almanac, pp. 745-793 Scholastic's Black Culture Program.

OBJECTIVES	LEARNING ACTIVITIES
3. DEMONSTRATES THE ABILITY TO SELECT AND EVALUATE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND MATERIALS WHICH TEACH THE AFRO-AMERICAN HERITAGE BY:	
3.1 identifying and evaluating resources which teach the Afro-American experiences in factual perspective.	Have participants select and review five books for children which relate the Afro-American experience in America and write an annotated bibliography. Include the reading level of each. Reproduce Bibliography found in Appendix of Afro-Americans Resource Materials and give a copy to each participant. Have them select and preview two of the films, then write a synopsis of each. The basic concepts shown should be included. Have participants listen to at least four of the tapes from Silhouettes In Courage and determine their affectiveness as teaching tools according to: 1. interest level 2. time span 3. authenticity of information 4. correlation to other resource materials included in the kit. Their responses should be related to 10-14-year-old children. Have participants preview the following filmstrips: The Search For Black Identity and Historical Interpretations of Negro Spirituals and critique each according to their use as teaching tools. Encourage them to list the reasons for selecting/not selecting each to teach the concept it pertains to.
3.2 developing a resources "bank".	Have each participant collect and/or list a selection of useful instructional strategies and materials which teach the Afro-American experience.

APPENDIX

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EXCERPTS FROM JESSE JACKSON, GIVE THE PEOPLE A VISION, NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, APRIL 18, 1976, p. 13

It is time, I believe, to reexamine the causes of the social and economic plight in which black Americans — and particularly the poor blacks of the Northern cities — still find themselves, despite the legal advances of the 60's . Since so many past analyses of this problem have failed to bring about satisfactory improvement, I think it is time to suggest some new approaches, based largely on new values. It is my view that such a fresh start offers the best hope not only of lifting up the black people but of saving America's cities. . . .

As a starting point, let us take a noteworthy statistic: There are now 130 black mayors in the United States. We blacks have populated the cities; we must now learn to run them. The need is urgent. The ethical collapse, the heroin epidemic, the large numbers of our people who are out of work and on welfare, and the disruptive violence in our schools all indicate that the cities may be destroying us.

The thrust of my argument is that black Americans must begin to accept a larger share of responsibility for their lives. For too many years we have been crying that racism and oppression have kept us down. That is true, and racism and oppression have to be fought on every front. But to fight any battle takes soldiers who are strong, healthy, spirited, committed, well-trained and confident. This is particularly true when the enemy is as tough and elusive as American racism. I don't believe that we will produce strong soldiers by moaning about what the enemy has done to us.

It is time, I think, for us to stand up, admit to our failures and weaknesses and begin to strengthen ourselves. Here are some of the things I am talking about:

There is a definite welfare mentality in many black communities that derives perhaps from slavery but that must now be overcome.

We have become politically apathetic. Only 7 million out of 14 million eligible black voters are registered to vote. Yet politics is one key to self-development. In terms of votes, we have more potential strength than labor or any other single bloc. We have a responsibility to use it to the full.

We too often condemn blacks who succeed and excel, calling them Toms and the like, when the ideal ought to be for all of us to succeed and excel.

We are allowing a minuscule minority of criminals in our midst to create disorder, ruin our schools and sap the energy we need to rebuild our neighborhoods and our cities.

Many leaders who are black, and many white liberals, will object to my discussing these things in public. But the decadence in black communities — killings, destruction of our own businesses, violence in the schools — is already in the headlines; the only question is what we should do about it. Others will object that to demand that we must meet the challenge of self-government is to put too much pressure on the victims of ancient wrongs. Yet in spite of yesterday's agony, liberation struggles are built on sweat and pain rather than tears and complaints. . . .

Through the proper use of money and a positive attitude, we can stimulate self-development and give the people a vision. . . .

We need to tell our young people in those cities "All right, we'll get all the state and Federal money that we can; but first and foremost, we need to put your hands and your bodies and your minds to work building our communities." What we must do for our young people is challenge them to put hope in their brains rather than dope in their veins. What difference does it make if the doors swing wide open if our young people are too dizzy to walk through them?

I often wonder what would happen if Coleman Young, the Mayor of Detroit, who has inherited a city of much moral and economic decay, were to go into one of Detroit's stadiums and had 50,000 or 60,000 people in there — just as Jomo Kenyatta has done, and Castro, and President Samora Machel of Mozambique — and delivered a resounding State of Detroit message.

"All right, people," he could say, "Detroit needs 200 doctors in the next 10 to 15 years, and here is what we will do to make certain that it happens. And we will need 200 lawyers and 400 electricians and 250 nurses, and here is what we will do to make sure it happens. I cannot pass a law about these things, but I am appealing to you parents and you children to cooperate. Parents, you must keep your children at home every night from 7 to 9 to study, and get them into bed by 10. Every morning the city will provide physical training directors in city parks. We will close off one block in every neighborhood for half an hour every morning for exercise — we want you out there getting your bodies healthy for this struggle for independence. . . ."

It is bad to be in the worst slums in the country; it is even worse if those slums are internalized, become part of you. Hence the therapeutic effect of the Black Power symbolism of the 60's. But some black students became so caught up in the symbolism of black nationalism and black liberation that they forgot about such basic skills as reading, writing and thinking.

God knows that I recognize the need for black self-pride. But that monument must be built on a solid foundation; we must not, as Dr. Marin Luther King Jr. used to say, confuse symbolism with substance. When I stand in front of an audience of 3,000 black high-school or college students and we chant back and forth, "I am somebody. I am somebody," I can feel them telling me: "I need to be told I am somebody, I need to know I am somebody." But shouting "I am somebody" is only the first small step toward independence.

In the last 10 to 12 years, many of us missed the chance to grow intellectually and chased Superfly instead. Many of us spent more time on lottery and luck than looking for a job. Many of us did not use the opportunities we had. But it is time to cut that now. That backward trend goes against our own best traditions. Africa's great leaders, from Nkrumah to Machel, have all been learned men.

Preoccupation with symbolism has also made it hard for many of us to distinguish service from servility.

As I travel around the county, I often eat in restaurants run by the Nation of Islam. One reason is that the waiters are the most courteous and prompt you will find anywhere. They enjoy serving black people: you will never find a Muslim waiter with an "attitude." Unfortunately, the same is not true of all blacks. I know of black contractors who have gone out of business because their black workers were not prompt or had negative attitudes. I know young black workers who talk with pride about going to work any hour they feel like it, taking a day off when they feel like it, wearing Apple Caps on the job, playing loud portable radios on the assembly line. They're rebelling against the system they say; they're exhibiting their independence. (There are many white workers, it should be added, who do the same.) What they're really exhibiting is ignorance of a tradition of work in the black community that is one of our proudest legacies.

Slavery is over now, but you can't fee a man who still has a slave mentality, just as you can't enslave a man who has a free spirit. We don't need to carry chips on our shoulders, fearing we are being treated in a servile manner. This does not mean we cannot be angry and loud and ornery on occasion, as all mortals have a way of being, but we should always try to use the power that derives from true courtesy. . . .

The greatest potential for self-development is to be found in the public schools in our cities. That is also where there is now the greatest potential for explosions. Predominantly black schools in most urban areas with high concentrations of black people — New York, Washington, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Boston — are largely out of control. Violence against students and teachers, perpetrated by students, is steadily and dangerously increasing. Drug abuse is an accepted fact of life; pushers operate freely in many schools, and police patrol the corridors. Discipline has broken down. In a number of New York schools, teachers complain that the places are run not by the principals but by the gangs. We need to change this because it is morally right, because it is necessary for our development, and because no one else is going to do it for us.

The principals are not alone: Parents, teachers, superintendents, school boards have all failed to impose discipline and create a proper atmosphere for learning. And if our young people are not learning today, we will not have the doctors, engineers, lawyers, mechanics, nurses, clerks and accountants that we will need to manage the cities. . . .

America is in the midst of a crisis, both in regard to its cities and in regard to its position in the world. Black Americans, inheritors of the role of the restess and disenfranchised minorities of the past who helped make America strong, have a historic opportunity to show that the cities can be saved. We can do so by stimulating change in the schools and the communities we control. . . .

The first and immediate task for American blacks is to rise up from the decadence in which we too often find ourselves in the cities, and to do so by the force of our will, our intellect, our energy and our faith in ourselves. It is a historic opportunity we cannot afford to miss.